



# INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent Information Network



### Transition Point 3: Primary to Intermediate School

#### Transition: The Next Step

Transition is movement or change without interruption. It should be a smooth flow from one place or condition to another. While the transition plan for a student receiving special education services is designed to prepare him or her for life after high school, transition can start when a child enters preschool. The third of six distinct stages of transition is from primary to intermediate school.

#### Factors of Change

Moving from the primary grades (K-3) to the intermediate grades (4-5) may not seem to be a time of special transition that needs special consideration. Classes may not change to another building so the expectations of the students may appear to be the same. However, primary classes are the grades in which skills are taught. These skills build how to listen, how to take turns and share, to reading, writing, spelling, and math.

In the fourth grade, students begin to apply the skills they learned in the primary years. They are expected to work independently and to use reading to access information. Some students with disabilities may fit in very well socially and emotionally, but may not have mastered some of the skills needed for the fourth grade. Other students may have mastered the skills needed but may need help with social and emotional adjustment at this age. Some learning requirements for a fourth grader are to:

- Use reading and writing to work independently,
- Follow directions,
- Stay on task for longer periods,
- Control behavioral impulses,
- Follow school policies independently,
- Tell time and judge time,
- Be responsible for assignments and homework.

#### Ages and Stages

Transition should be smooth between primary and intermediate schools. A transition plan may be needed

as part of the IEP. Primary grades are generally K-3. Intermediate grades are usually fourth, fifth, and sixth, depending on the design of the school district. Students in the primary grades are generally five to eight years of age, and intermediate grades are generally nine to eleven years of age, if they entered school at age five and have not been retained.

#### Making the Transition Smoother

Children with disabilities do not master grade level skills all at the same time. Those skills not yet mastered may need to be included in the IEP. For example, students with learning disabilities may still be unable to read and answer questions without their teacher's guidance. The transition to reading independently may need to be addressed in the student's IEP. A student with receptive language disabilities may need ongoing help following directions. A student with problems staying on task or paying attention for long periods or time may need goals to improve these skills. Shaping behaviors effectively for some children means designing a plan to increase desired behaviors a little at a time. Some behaviors cause students and staff undue stress. The student's IEP might contain a goal that will help the student improve behavior and/or changing expectations to help shape the student's behavior. Most teachers can develop a plan to improve appropriate behaviors.

Other aids might be used to help signal when it is time to complete a task, go to recess, to return from the playground, or to catch the bus.

Missing skills and behaviors that are needed to help a student succeed in school should be addressed in the IEP when making a transition to intermediate grades.

The use of assistive technology devices designed to facilitate learning such as enlarged print, Braille, auditory trainers, and communication boards should also be addressed in the IEP, when transitions are made.

Elementary school age is a time when students are expected to practice what they have learned each day by doing homework. Sometimes students with disabilities need extra time in understanding the assignments, completing them, or returning them to school. A statement of this expectation might be written within an academic goal on the IEP, which could include working independently.

Today children are maturing much earlier. This means that some ten year olds will be experiencing puberty. Parents are often the first to realize this, and wonder if their concerns should be mentioned at a school meeting. Because early maturity can be confusing to your child as well, it might need to be addressed as a transitional subject, particularly if the student with disabilities is older than his or her classmates.

The primary goal for all students is to succeed. When daily routine and expectations hinder success, it is important to examine the reason and make adjustments so that the student can succeed. Planning for transition is the first step for accomplishment.

## References

*Developing and including transition services in the IEP.* (1995). Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Transition Services.

## Books

Straub, D. Ph.D. (1998). *Delicate threads: Friendships between children with and without special needs in inclusive settings.* Rockville, MD: Woodbine House.

Marsh, Jayne, D. B. (1995). *From the heart.* Rockville, MD: Woodbine House.

Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Transition Services. (2004) *Navigating the Transition Highway: From Tots to Teens with Ease.* Phoenix, AZ: Author.  
[www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition)

## Organizations

Arizona Children's Information Center, 411 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St. Phoenix, AZ 85008, 602-220-6550, 800-232-1676, [www.hs.state.az.us](http://www.hs.state.az.us)

Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 N. Glebe Rd. Ste.300, Arlington, VA 22201, 800-845- 6232, [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, P.O. Box 1492, Washington DC 20013-1492, 800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

PACER Center, National Center for Grandparents Support, 4826 Chicago Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044, 612-827-2966, [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-3852, 800-352-4558, [www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals)

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, 2600 N. Wyatt, Tucson, AZ 85712, 520-324-3150, [www.pilotparents.org](http://www.pilotparents.org)

Raising Special Kids, 2400 N. Central Ave. Suite 220, Phoenix, AZ 85004, 800-237-3007, [www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)

Institute for Human Development, Assistive Technology Center, P.O. Box 5630, Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5630, 928-523-5878, [www.nau.edu/ihd](http://www.nau.edu/ihd)

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) P.O. Box 30007, Flagstaff, AZ 86003, [www.ade.az.us/ess/eapn](http://www.ade.az.us/ess/eapn)